



Impossibility: The Limits of Science and the Science of Limits

John D. Barrow

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In *Impossibility*, John D. Barrow--one of our most elegant and accomplished science writers--argues convincingly that there are limits to human discovery, that there are things that are ultimately unknowable, undoable, or unreachable. Barrow first examines the limits of the human mind: our brain evolved to meet the demands of our immediate environment, and much that lies outside this small circle may also lie outside our understanding. He investigates practical impossibilities, such as those imposed by complexity, uncomputability, or the finiteness of time, space, and resources. Is the universe finite or infinite? Can information be transmitted faster than the speed of light? The book also examines deeper theoretical restrictions on our ability to know, including Godel's theorem, which proved that there were things that could not be proved. Finally, having explored the limits imposed on us from without, Barrow considers whether there are limits we should impose upon ourselves. Weaving together this intriguing tapestry, Barrow illuminates some of the most profound questions of science, from the possibility of time travel to the very structure of the universe.

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